

TITLE:

Technical Guidance on Partnership Structure and Communication Strategy to Support IWAP Implementation T-95-R-1

NEED**Background**

The focus of the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan (IWAP, State of Illinois 2005) is to link people and resources to meet identified wildlife and habitat goals. Activities to meet these goals are informed by the distribution of certain species and their habitats that are deemed important by the public and resource managers. The Illinois Wildlife Action Plan contains hundreds of action items for addressing species in greatest conservation need and their habitats. These activities are accomplished through efforts by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and partnering conservation organizations. In 2004, to facilitate cooperation with and between conservation and land management organizations, IDNR established an Illinois Fish and Wildlife Action Team whose stated purpose was to:

- Ensure the actions described in the Action Plan become on the ground results
- Facilitate collaboration and communications among organizations
- Shape future priorities for wildlife and habitat conservation

The committee structure included a chair, filled by an IDNR staff person, and 22 core team members: twelve nonprofit conservation organizations and ten governmental Departments (such as Agriculture, Transportation, Environmental Protection, etc.). In addition, more than 150 partners participated in the committee's various Working Groups.

Over the past nine years, partnerships that evolved through the Action Team accomplished many successful protection and restoration projects that addressed species in greatest conservation need and their habitats. The Action Team not only ensured that the necessary activities were addressed at the right time and place, but it also created an environment that ensured that limited restoration dollars and other resources were used effectively; helped avoid duplicative efforts; supported consistent monitoring; and allowed for conservation organizations, governmental agencies, and scientists to work in cooperation and learn from each other. Today, however, Campaign Teams have become the place where partners interact and only a small group of partners continue to attend Action Team meetings.

With the IWAP revision on the horizon, it is critical to re-engage historically strong partners and invite additional organizations in redrafting and implementing the plan. Organization partners who are actively involved in the revision and are part of discussions with IDNR regarding future implementation will be more likely to incorporate the Action Plan into their organization's work plans, resulting in long-term restoration and protection efforts for species in greatest conservation need.

In addition to re-evaluating partners and identifying the preferred means by which partners want to interact with IDNR, partners have asked for clarification on the priorities

within Illinois' Wildlife Action Plan. During the 2013 Vital Lands of Illinois Summit, several information-collecting sessions focused on the IWAP revision were held. Attendees in the Summit included more than 70 Illinois conservation professionals representing over 30 organizations. Participants were asked many questions about the IWAP revision, including: what worked well in the past, what was needed in the revision and if and how IWAP was going to be used by conservation organizations in the future. In a survey taken at the end of the Summit, eighty-five percent of attendees claimed they planned on using the newly revised IWAP.

Additionally, participants identified several features of the IWAP that could be enhanced to make it more applicable to their work. Answers included:

- Identify best practices
- Step down the recommended actions so they are easier to implement
- Clarify the role of IDNR in implementation partnerships
- Would like IDNR to add guidelines for how IDNR will partner with and support implementers
- Add chapter overviews in language everyone can understand
- Clear directions for implementation
- The potential to pull people together hasn't happened fully yet, so focused attempts to do this should be part of the process/enhancements
- Include information so an organization can tap into the plan

Combined the survey responses clearly indicate:

1. Conservation organizations value IWAP
2. They want to work with IDNR and other partners to implement it
3. There are critical systems and tools outside of the actual plan that need to be in place so that IDNR and groups can effectively jointly implement the actions

In Summary

Through this project, IDNR will receive the technical assistance necessary to evaluate and devise a partnership structure and develop communication materials that will allow it to work in close partnership with Illinois conservation organizations in the implementation of the revised IWAP. A careful relationship structure designed to engage all partners in an outcome-oriented manner is imperative for succeeding in the conservation and management of species with greatest conservation need.

Illinois has several hundred conservation organizations and a rich history of conservation efforts, including the establishment of Forest Preserve Districts and the creation of large conservation areas such as Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, Nachusa Grasslands, Hackmatack, and the Kankakee Marsh. These are the result of not only a strong conservation ethic in the state, but also because of the long tradition of partnerships among the many cooperating conservation organizations and Illinois agencies.

Without appropriate communication materials and a strong, dynamic and responsive partnership structure that is poised to engage partners in IWAP implementation, the revised IWAP will likely languish and the implementation of activities critical to the conservation of species with the greatest conservation need will be placed on the shoulders of a resource-strapped IDNR staff.

Purpose:

To provide IDNR with the tools and materials necessary for broad communications about the revised IWAP AND for creating a high-functioning Wildlife Action Plan Team that will be instrumental in implementing the revised IWAP, thereby addressing species in greatest conservation need and their habitats.

OBJECTIVES

Objective 1. Develop IWAP communications plan, with associated supporting materials and implementation directions for IDNR IWAP campaign staff by February 1, 2015.

- 1.1 Identify target audiences and key messages for each of the six IWAP campaigns.
- 1.2 Use information from 1.1 to conduct an IDNR communications audit, develop a communication plan with recommended communication activities and corresponding implementation timeline.
- 1.3 Write and design communication materials needed for engaging audiences in IWAP implementation, including IWAP Primer, website text and engaging, easy-to-understand introductions for each of the six revised IWAP chapters.

Objective 2. Identify a structure for engaging conservation partners in the implementation of Illinois' Wildlife Action Plan by March 1, 2015.

- 2.1 Survey individuals from the 22 core partner organizations that presently comprise the Action Team and determine level of interest, commitment and preferred participation mechanism.
- 2.2 Survey individuals from at least 50 other conservation organizations in IL to determine role in Action Plan implementation and preferred participation mechanism.
- 2.3 Develop a partnership structure that meets the needs of the conservation partners and the IDNR.
- 2.4 Develop a template for partnership agreements that can be used by IDNR to formalize expectations and roles with interested conservation partner organizations.

Objective 3. Develop detailed plans and instructions for launching the new partnership structure by September 2015.

- 3.1 Write a meeting plan for 2016 that details how to implement the proposed partnership strategy.
- 3.2 Create materials for IDNR to use in the first year of implementing the partnership structure , such as invitations, agendas and a power point.

RESULTS and BENEFITS

Outputs:

- 1. Communications plan, communication materials and implementation timeline to support technology transfer between conservation partners and IDNR.**
- 2. “Guiding Principles” document that details the partnership structure for IDNR and conservation partners and partnership agreement templates**
- 3. Plan, timeline and meeting materials for first year of implementing the new partnership structure.**

A completed IWAP communication plan, materials and timeline and Guiding Principles that outline the partnership structure between IDNR and Illinois’ conservation partners will play a critical role in the successful revision and implementation of the IWAP. Successful IWAP implementation will depend on a great variety of organizations providing an even wider range of resources for implementing the activities that will support the recovery of the species in greatest need of conservation. Standard conservation organizations will play a critical role in supplying the resources and actually completing the activities. However there are many other types of organizations that can play a direct or indirect role in furthering successful IWAP implementation including volunteer groups, local funders, colleges and Universities, research and planning organizations and coalitions. Each group needs to be successfully engaged, they need to understand where they fit in and how they can redirect their own resources in a way to advance IWAP implementation.

The communications plan, materials and timeline is necessary for engaging all of these important stakeholders. This project will result in the following:

The resource: The communications plan, materials and timeline and the new partnership structure will help species in greatest need of conservation by creatively garnering as many resources as possible and directing them all towards IWAP implementation.

User: The communications plan, materials and timeline and the new partnership structure will build the communications capacity of IDNR staff, so that for IWAP implementation and beyond, they can successfully engage others, who without these tools, would be hard to reach.

Economy: The communications plan, materials and timeline and the new partnership structure will allow for streamlining resources. They will ensure that the diverse group of stakeholders understand and are in agreement with what needs to be achieved. When this has happened, stakeholders can redirect some of their resources towards IWAP activities.

Society: Successful landscape-scale conservation results in many societal benefits, including ecosystem services, conserved open space for outdoor exploration and recreation, ecotourism opportunities and mitigation of the impacts of climate change.

APPROACH

Objective 1. Develop an IWAP communications plan, supporting materials and implementation timeline by February 1, 2015.

1.1 Identify target audiences and key messages for each of the six IWAP campaigns.

Two to three planning meetings will be designed and facilitated with IDNR staff (and possibly a few other key stakeholders) in order to identify target audiences and what that target audience should know and do with relation to the IWAP revision. Possible audiences include: state and federal agencies, conservation organizations, Action Team members, other conservation organizations in Illinois or outside scientists or researchers. For each audience that is identified for inclusion in the communications plan, the group will work to detail the targeted audiences' values, knowledge base and opinions, which are critical to designing an effective communication strategy.

1.2 Use information from 1.1 to conduct an IDNR communications audit, develop a communication plan with recommended communication activities and corresponding implementation timeline.

It is imperative to have a complete understanding of IDNR's existing communication tools that are available for implementing the communications plan. This information is used to ensure that the communications plan will only include communication tasks that the IDNR already has the capacity to implement. For example, if there is an IDNR list-serve the Communications Plan would include sample list-serve messages and recommend the frequency of using the list-serve in the implementation timeline. A survey will be developed and IDNR staff will be asked to complete it in order to collect this information.

With information collected from 1.1 and the communications audit, a series of communication activities to reach the audiences will be identified. Activities could include an email campaign, website text, magazine article or a Power Point presentation. Detail for each activity will also include the materials or tools needed to implement each activity, who should do it, how often and when. This information all coalesces into a draft Communications Plan and timeline. The Communication Plan also contains an evaluation plan that can be easily used by the IDNR to measure the reach and success of the Communications Plan.

This draft will be shared with and reviewed by the appropriate IDNR staff. Communications materials will begin to be developed after edits have been incorporated into the plan.

1.3 Write and design communication materials needed for engaging audiences in IWAP implementation, including IWAP Primer, website text and engaging, easy-to-understand introductions for each of the six revised IWAP chapters.

The purpose of the Primer is to summarize the accomplishments of the first IWAP and outline the goals and priorities for the revised IWAP. It will be similar to the booklet entitled “Defining a Vision for Conservation Success,” developed by the Illinois Natural History Survey and the “What’s the Future of Illinois Wildlife,” an insert that was part of an issue of *Outdoor Illinois* magazine. To develop the Primer an outline will be developed and shared with appropriate IDNR staff for approval and to collect feedback. Once there is agreement on the content, the Primer will be written, designed and printed. A high resolution, easy to print PDF version will be developed for placing on the IDNR website and for sharing electronically, and a small number will be printed.

Using the text developed for the Primer, we’ll prepare web site text that is appropriate for the typical IDNR website visitor and write engaging, easy-to-understand introductions for each of the six revised IWAP chapters.

Objective 2. Identify a structure for engaging conservation partners in the revision and implementation of Illinois’ Wildlife Action Plan by February 1, 2015.

2.1 Survey individuals from the 22 core partner organizations that presently comprise the Action Team and determine level of continued interest and preferred participation mechanism.

There are 22 organizations with long standing history and relationships with IDNR and were a part of the original Action Team group. These 22 core partner organizations have the resources for implementing the IWAP actions and most share IDNR’s habitat conservation and restoration goals. Therefore understanding their perspective on the future implementation of the revised IWAP is crucial. A detailed survey for the “core partners” will be developed using the Survey Monkey online program. The survey will be comprised of questions to determine:

- Simple and convenient tools for their organization to use to implement IWAP activities
- Resources that they feel are critical to a successful IWAP implementation and resources they can offer to support implementation
- Ideas for the structure of the Action Team, suggestions for the type and level of issues that the Action Team should address and how they would define a successful Action Team
- Their preferred level of involvement in the Action Team.
- The key staff from the organization that will be involved in the Action Team

2.2 Survey individuals from at least 50 other conservation organizations in IL to determine roles in IWAP revision and implementation and the preferred participation mechanism.

There are more than 50 other organizations in the state that work on conservation in Illinois at some level. These organizations will also be asked to complete a survey. A survey (different from the “Core Partners” survey) will be designed and implemented. This survey will determine:

- How they would like to be involved in IWAP implementation
- Ways that they intend to use the revised IWAP
- Resources that they may commit to the implementation of activities
- The part of the state they work in
- Frequency and level of detail of information about the IWAP they would like to receive or be posted on the IDNR website

2.3 Develop a partnership structure that meets the needs of the conservation partners and the IDNR.

The survey results from 2.1 and 2.1 will reveal a great deal about IDNR’s conservation partners including how they want to be involved in and what they can commit to IWAP implementation. This information will be used to devise a partnership structure with accompanying Guiding Principles The Guiding Principles will clearly define the purpose of the partnership structure, its’ role in IWAP implementation and the tasks and expectations of all participants at various levels of involvement.

The chapters in the Guiding Principles include:

- Background
- Vision
- Purpose
- Goals
- Membership
- Expectations
- Structure
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Communications
- Guiding Principles Revision Process

A final draft will be shared with the 22 Core Partners via a webinar where the partners can discuss and critique the Guiding Principles. Realistic revisions will be made to the document before being finalized.

2.4 Develop a template for partnership agreements that can be used by IDNR to formalize expectations and roles with interested conservation partners.

While the Guiding Principles document describes in detail the purpose of the partnership and the role of its participants, it is important that each partner understand their individual commitments. To help clarify and standardize expectations of partners, a Partnership Agreement will be created. All participants will be asked to agree to and

sign the Partnership agreement. The Partnership Agreement will include what IDNR promised to contribute as well as the basic expectations of the Action Team members.

In addition to standardized language that will appear on all Partnership Agreements, there will also be an opportunity to customize it by adding detail unique to the partner signing the document. Customization will promote commitment to IWAP implementation as the partner will be agreeing to provide something specific to advance the plan. These individual commitments can be used to guide and prioritize implementation activities according to resources available from partners for implementation.

Objective 3. Develop detailed plans, instructions and materials for launching the new partnership structure and collecting partnership agreements by September 2015.

3.1 Write a meeting plan for 2016 that details how to implement the proposed partnership strategy and create materials for a year of meetings.

The Guiding Principles will provide information about the basic structure for the new partnership. The next step will be the creation of a plan and timeline for implementing the partnership structure. The plan will include what communications should go out to partners and when, a calendar of meetings or webinars with the purpose and general agenda for each one. Draft invitations, meeting agendas, handouts and other meeting items will also be created. The timeline will go from Q4 2015 through the end of 2016.

3.2 Conduct a powerpoint to introduce partners to new structure and discuss partnership agreements.

Invitations to participate in the newly structured partnership Action Team will be sent partners. The invitation will include information about the new partnership purpose and structure. All will be asked to attend a subsequent webinar where more detailed information will be provided about the proposed partnership plans, the specific role of IDNR and the IWAP revision. During the webinar Action Team members will be introduced to the partnership agreement developed in 2.4 above.

Partners will be asked to complete and return the Partnership Agreements. Finally partners will learn about the meeting and webinar plans and schedule for the year.

All Action Team members will receive a follow-up phone call in order to answer any additional questions and insure the partnership agreements are completed and submitted to the IDNR.

Useful Life: Not Applicable

Geographic Location:

This project will be completed by Bluestem Communications staff in Chicago, Illinois

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:

Jennifer Browning, Executive Director
Bluestem Communications
14. North Peoria
Chicago IL 60607
PH: 312-754-0403
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Program Income: Not Applicable

BUDGET NARRATIVE:

Salaries and Wages: We request a total of \$18,342.70 in IDNR staff time for oversight and assistance with this project. Staff at IDNR will need to provide guidance throughout the project in identifying the appropriate conservation partners, reviewing survey materials and results analysis, and in providing feedback on the recommended Action Team purpose and structure. Furthermore IDNR staff will participate in the project by completing the Communications Audit, participating in developing the appropriate communication activities and in actually implementing many of the communications activities.

We request a total of \$48,100.00 for the following three staff members to conduct the project. Breakdown by hour, staff and task is as follows:

Objective 1

Develop IWAP communications plan, with associated supporting materials and implementation directions for IDNR IWAP campaign staff by February 1, 2015

- 1.1 Identify target audiences and key messages for each of the six IWAP campaigns.

R.Bell (40 hrs)

J.Browning (30 hrs)

- 1.2 Use information from 1.1 to conduct an IDNR communications audit, develop a communication plan with recommended communication activities and corresponding implementation timeline.

R.Bell (40 hrs)

J.Browning (6 hrs)

L. Brown (8 hrs)

- 1.3 Write and design communication materials needed for engaging audiences in IWAP implementation, including IWAP Primer, website text and engaging, easy-to-understand introductions for each of the six revised IWAP chapters.

R.Bell (78 hrs)

J.Browning (18 hrs)

L. Brown (24 hrs)

Objective 2.

Identify a structure for engaging conservation partners in the implementation of Illinois' Wildlife Action Plan by March 1, 2015.

2.1 Survey individuals from the 22 core partner organizations that presently comprise the Action Team and determine level of interest, commitment and preferred participation mechanism.

R.Bell (40 hrs)

J.Browning (8 hrs)

L. Brown (8 hrs)

2.2 Survey individuals from 50 other conservation organizations in IL to determine role in Action Plan implementation and preferred participation mechanism.

R.Bell (40 hrs)

J.Browning (8 hrs)

L. Brown (8 hrs)

2.3 Develop a partnership structure that meets the needs of the conservation partners and the IDNR

R.Bell (32 hrs)

J.Browning (8 hrs)

2.4 Develop a template for partnership agreements that can be used by IDNR to formalize expectations and roles with interested conservation partners.

R.Bell (8 hrs)

J.Browning (8 hrs)

Objective 3.

Develop detailed plans and instructions for launching the new partnership structure by September 2015.

1.1 Write a meeting plan for 2016 that details how to implement the proposed partnership strategy.

R.Bell (32 hrs)

J.Browning (64 hrs)

L. Brown (12 hrs)

3.2 Create materials for IDNR to use in the first year of implementing the partnership structure , such as invitations, agendas and a power point

R.Bell (32 hrs)

J.Browning (64 hrs)

L. Brown (12 hrs)

Travel: We request a total of \$1,320.00 for in-state travel. This will be used to cover the costs incurred from attending meetings in Springfield and other locals across the state where meetings with conservation partners will be held. (6 trips/400 miles/trip@.55/mile)

Materials and Supplies: We request a total of \$1,300 for the following materials

- \$500 to purchase materials for use during the project: Meeting materials, easels, pads of paper, markers and copies of handouts: 2 easels @ 100, 6 pads @ \$40, markers 10 @ \$3, printing handouts, 70 packets @\$1
- We request a total of \$200 for in-house printing of information packets, surveys and drafts of messages for testing: 500 copies @ .40
- We request a total of \$600 for photos and images for the IWAP Primer, 30 images @ \$20 per piece.

Contractual Services: We request a total of \$8,000 for contractual services to cover graphic design services.

Graphic design, TJS Design, Traci Jendo, (\$100/ hour total) 100 hours is 10,000 total. This contractor donates \$20/hr in-kind, for a total of \$2,000.00

BUDGET:

Budget Catagories	Federal Funds	Non-Federal Funds (1)	IDNR	Total
Salaries and Wages				
Bluestem, Exec Dir. (J. Browning, 128 hrs fed, 86 hrs nonfed @ \$100/hour)	\$12,800.00	\$8,600.00		\$21,400.00
Bluestem, Comm. Dir. (R. Bell, 326 hrs fed, 16 hrs nonfed @ \$100/hour)	\$32,600.00	\$1,600.00		\$34,200.00
Bluestem, Comm Asst. (L. Brown, 36 hrs fed, 18 hrs nonfed @ \$75/hour)	\$2,700.00	\$1,350.00		\$4,050.00
IDNR salary related			\$15,500.00	\$15,500.00
Travel				
In-State				
Meals / Per Diem				\$0.00
Lodging				\$0.00
Mileage (6 trips/400	\$1,320.00			\$1,320.00

miles/trip@.55/mile)				
Materials and Supplies				
Photos and images	\$600.00			\$600.00
Meeting materials (easels/pads of paper/markers/handouts)	\$500.00			\$500.00
Printing (500 copies at \$.40/copy)	\$200.00			\$200.00
Contractual Services				
TJS design for 100hrs of design time	\$8,000.00	\$2,000.00		\$10,000.00
Total Direct Costs	\$58,720.00	\$13,550.00	\$15,500.00	\$87,770.00
IDNR Indirect Rate of <u>18.34</u> % *			\$2,843.00	\$2,843.00
Total Project Costs	\$58,720.00	\$13,550.00	\$18,343.00	\$90,613.00
Percentage of Total Project Cost	65%	15%	20%	100.00%

BUDGET JUSTIFICATION:

Salaries and Wages:

Bluestem Communications, a nonprofit organization will provide the staff necessary to complete this project for a total cost of \$59,650.00.

Of that amount, \$11,550 is non-federal match.

The federal request for Bluestem salaries is \$48,000

\$18,342.70 in staff time will be provided by IDNR as match to this project.

- **Jennifer Browning**, Bluestem Communications, Executive Director (\$100/hr), 128 hours federal (\$12,800), 86 in-kind (\$8,600.00)
- **Rebeca Bell**, Bluestem Communications, Communications Director (\$100/hrs), 326 hours federal, (\$32,600) and 16 in-kind (1,600.00)
- **Laura Brown**, Bluestem Communications, Communications Assoc. (\$75/hr), 36 hours federal, (\$2,700) and 18 in-kind 1,350.00

Travel: We request \$1,320 in travel funds to support six trips to Springfield based on 400 miles/trip @ \$0.55/mile.

Equipment: None

Materials and Supplies:

We request

\$600 to cover photos and images used in the communication materials;

\$500 for meeting materials such as easels, paper, and markers;

\$200 to cover printing expenses.

Contractual Services: We request \$8,000 in contractual services to cover the rates of the graphic designer.

Multipurpose Projects: Not Applicable

Relationship To Other Grants: Not Applicable

TIMELINE

Objective 1 – Q1 2014, Q1 2015 and Q2 2015

Objective 2 - Q1 2014, Q1 2015 and Q2 2015

Objective 3 - Q2 2015 through Q2 2016

General:

(i) SUBSTANTIAL IN CHARACTER AND DESIGN

The project statement describes a need consistent with the -State Wildlife Grants (SWG); states a purpose and sets objectives, both of which are based on the need; uses a planned approach, appropriate procedures and research; and is cost effective.

(ii) COMPLIANCE

The IDNR will use its CERP (Comprehensive Environmental Review Process) as a tool to aid the Department in meeting NEPA compliance for the project outlined under this grant proposal. It is the Department's policy to require CERP applications for all land disturbing activities unless those activities are covered by CERP exemptions.

All planned activities will also be in compliance with the Endangered Species Act. All determinations and documentation will be in accordance with the current established U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service protocols for section 7.

All planned activities will be in compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act and the Council on Historic Preservation Act. All determinations and documentation will be in accordance with the terms of the Programmatic Agreement, as amended, effective September 23, 2002.

When applicable, those planned activities which involve a floodplain and/or jurisdiction wetlands will be done in accordance with Presidential Executive Orders 11988 and 11990.

When applicable, those planned activities which involve programs and/or site improvements will be done in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

When applicable, those planned activities which involve the use of pesticides, herbicides or other comparable chemicals will be done in accordance with current state and federal regulations to assure the safe and legal application of those chemicals. All chemicals will be applied in accordance with the manufacturers label instructions. All persons applying chemicals will be licensed by the Illinois Department of Agriculture as a chemical operator along with a licensed applicator, in accordance with Illinois state law

(iii) PERSONNEL:

The following personnel from IDNR Office of Resource Conservation (ORC), One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702 will manage this project:

Ann Marie Holtrop
IDNR Watershed Protection Section
Phone: [\(217\) 785-4325](tel:217-785-4325)
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The following personnel from IDNR are involved in this project:

James Renn
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Stan McTaggart
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Nancy Williamson

Randy Smith

Green Cities Campaign

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Wetlands Campaign

Phone: [\(760\) 889-0656](tel:760-889-0656)

E-mail: cdana2@illinois.edu

(iv) ABOUT BLUESTEM COMMUNICATIONS

Bluestem Communications, a nonprofit organization, has 19 years of experience building creative communications campaigns and materials and supporting coalitions to protect and promote North America's most precious land and water resources. Since 1995, we have earned a reputation in the environmental community as a leader in the field of values-based communications and research-based message development. Working in collaboration with numerous regional and national organizations, Bluestem Communications has developed websites, newsletters, educational programs and tours, brochures, guidebooks, paid and earned media campaigns, citizen engagement events, compelling incentive giveaways and photo contests. The topics we have worked on are as varied as our methods—from encouraging outdoor recreation and reducing agricultural pollution to endangered species and resource protection—affecting specific ecosystems and watersheds such as the Great Lakes, the Mississippi River, Des Plaines River valley in Illinois, Rock River basin in Wisconsin and the Scioto River basin in Ohio.

Bluestem Communications has developed specialized, adaptable tools to guide agencies and organizations through the strategic planning and communications planning processes. We utilize a very specific, tried and true method for researching and developing education, outreach and behavior change campaigns. We've combined **research, values-based communications, meeting facilitation and social marketing strategies** into a system that gets to the root of an organization's goals and tailors efforts to particular audiences. Applying these tools while developing strategic plans and communications strategies can make or break efforts to change behaviors and promote sustainable decision-making.

We've recently worked with the following organizations and coalitions to build communications strategies, messages and campaign materials:

- America's Great Waters Coalition
- Tree Stewards and Master Naturalists of Arlington, VA
- Chicago Wilderness Alliance
- City of Dublin, Ohio
- Delavan Lake Watershed Initiative Network
- Forest Preserves of Cook County
- Illinois Coastal Management Program
- Mississippi River Network
- Winnebago Waterways Steering Team (Five-County Coalition)